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Autumn Leaves

Mrs. Mildred Atkins Johnston



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BY

MRS. MILDRED ADKINS JOHNSTON



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BEAUMONT, TEXAS

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JAN 15 1918

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TO THE LOVING MEMORY OF MY HUSBAND,
CYRUS FRANCIS JOHNSTON, IS THIS
LITTLE BOOK DEDICATED.

—M. A. J.

DEAR FRIEND.

WERE it in the Springtime
And merry winds were blowing,
And every little cloudlet
With its golden freight was going
Down into the silver west,
I would ask you out a-Maying,
Where woodland nymphs and happy streams
By daffodils are straying.

But the year is growing old
And "Autumn winds are sighing;"
Birds sing not so gaily now,
When painted leaves are flying.
The face of every pool and stream
Reflects a sombre sky,
And hurrying clouds just silver-edged,
Like Norns in grey go by.

TO GREEN RIVER, KENTUCKY.

SWEET river, through thy devious ways,
Thou bearest me back to childhood's days;
How oft upon thy mirrored breast
I've skimmed, in light canoe, thy wavelet's crest.

I've gazed into thy waters deep,
Where shore and sky and wooded steep,
Reflected there, in sunset's glow,
Gave back a fairer world below.

Thy emerald waters, deep as then,
Lave lichened rock and bosky glen;
Where stand the kine in placid ease,
The ripples breaking 'round their knees.

With reel and line, in a shady nook,
The angler drops his leaded hook;
The king-fisher stands with solemn mien,
Gazing through thy depths of green.

I love thy shady reaches, cool and wide,
Or the drift-rack on thy yellow tide;
As a lamb turned loose in the fields to roam,
Or a tiger wild with teeth of foam.

When Boreas fans thee with his wings
And the skater's music gaily rings,
Thou art dreadful in thy fetters fast,
A giant chained in the chainless blast.

Dear river, though I wander far,
Thou'lt be to me my guiding star;
When other birds shall o'er thee fly,
We'll keep our tryst, just you and I.

LINES ON PRESENTING A HANDKERCHIEF.

One of the Blue Monday Gifts to Our
Missionary in Corea.

TAKE my little gift, I pray,
And open it the usual way;
That's on a Monday to be right,
Whether Monday blue or Monday bright.

Should driving toil your way beset
And your brow be damp with honest sweat,
Then take this bit of rag and lace
To dry your flushed and streaming face.

If North winds pipe with cutting blast
And your eyes grow red and tears run fast,
Make sure your pocket holds a friend—
This square of lawn, I'd recommend.

If laugh you must, for mirth will come,
And the eyes brim o'er with gushing fun,
You'll find this little 'kerchief great
To set your crumpled features straight.

But on one point I must insist,
For that's the point that's often missed—
If woes come thick and blessings fly,
Don't use *this one* to wipe "the cry."

THE RAIN ON THE SHINGLES.


THE shadows creep out from ghostly nooks,
And with them early the twilight mingles;
Then I sit and muse on life's fair June,
And list to the rain on the shingles.

My dog and my pipe, good comrades are they,
As I sit by the glowing ingle;
My thoughts run swift to the morning of life,
Called back by the rain on the shingles.

A little white cot 'neath rafters brown,
Where a voice with my dream sweetly mingles;
A tuck and a pat and good-night kiss
Come back with the rain on the shingles.

I crave not mansions of wealth and state,
I abjure the world's vain jingles;
But, oh, to be that boy again
That slept 'neath the rain-washed shingles.

SUMMER NIGHT (Song).

 SUMMER night, so softly bright,
Thy spirit face is veiled in mystic light;
I catch thy sigh, it breathes so nigh,
Sweet as the rose it passes by.

O, summer night, sweet summer night,
Give back those roses red and white—
Red and white.

Thy murmuring sleep, now light, now deep,
The measure true the mock birds keep;
Thy dewy breast just heaves in rest,
To rock the woodbird in his nest.

O, summer night, sweet summer night,
O, rock me on thy waves of light—
Waves of light.

Another night, as fair and bright,
Returns to me its tender light,
When hope was new and friends were true
And tears were fleet as summer dew.

O, the years' swift flight; O, time in your might,
Give back to me that summer night—
Summer night.

GARDENS.

FROM out a quaint old fragrant garden
I met the west wind stealing by the
yellow roses,
All redolent of Springtime posies,
And when he brushed a petal off
He politely begged their pardon.

From out my heart's old neglected garden
I met the west wind stealing by the yellowed
roses,
All laden with the aims of other years;
But for those aspirations brushed aside
Who is to beg my pardon?

COUNTRY-BRED.

I KNOW the trees in the yard of my friend,
I know how their branches grow,
How their tops spread out and sway and bend,
But the house of my friend I do not know.

I know the forms that the clouds take on,
I know the color and tints of the skies;
The sparkle on streams that the winds awaken,
But I can not tell you the color of your eyes.

I know where the columbine grows in the shade,
I know where lush ferns hang over a bank;
I know how the humming bird's nest is made,
But my knowledge of the people I meet is a blank.

I know all the trees in the forest at home,
And the paths where the cattle and sheep used
to roam;
But I do not know—and this is a pity—
I cannot learn the people and streets of the city.

WAITING.

THE waving corn grows green and fair,
The breezes toss her yellow hair,
Unbound by the "love vine's" coral net—
So one I love, I clasp not yet.

The summer rain falls soft and low,
I hear its footsteps come and go;
But other steps I long to hear,
With summer showers draw not near.

Now quiet evening shadows gloam,
The roving cattle seek their home;
Their guiding bell is at the gate,
But for my rover still I wait.

The twilight shrouds the gleaming sky,
The circling swallows homeward fly;
They fold their wings in the welcome nest—
O, come, my wanderer, home and rest.

Now in russet heaps the corn lies low,
In red and gold the woodlands glow;
The cows forsake the meadows sere—
She's coming soon—King Frost is here.

To a sunny clime the swallows flit,
Their empty nest the flame has lit;
She ought to see this hearth's bright glow—
Speed onward, birds, and tell her so.

The whirling snowflakes leap and dart,
But a breath falls warm on my radiant heart;
For one I love, I wait no more—
She's coming now—she's at the door.

A TOAST—BABIES.

PES, welcome to the babies,
With their soft and clinging charms;
They fill up all the gaps of life—
Also the tired arms.

Leisure palls without them,
They soothe the troubled breast;
They fill the day with sunshine
And rob the night of rest.

They are cunning and they're cute,
And they are angels—maybe—
But for upsetting well-laid plans,
There's nothing like a baby.

TEN MILES FROM BABYLAND.

(To my little friend, V. R., on
her tenth birthday.)

LIFE'S sea to you
Is just in view,
Its shores lie veiled
In mists of blue.

You stand beside
The flowing tide
And gaze on its waters
Vague and wide.

The future stands
With outstretched hands,
Beckoning you
Across the sands.

"May your winged boat,
A bird afloat,
Swim safely round
Those peaks remote."

THE OLD LOG SCHOOLHOUSE.

(The Pioneer Schoolhouse of Graham's District,
Ohio County, Kentucky.)

To Mrs. Lillian Jarnagin, whose schooldays inspired
these lines, are they lovingly inscribed.

A PICTURE I have—it hangs in Memory's Hall;
Beside it the limner's creations grow pale,
My childhood returns at the lure of its call—
'Tis the old schoolhouse of logs in the dale.

Over hills and through woods the children come,
Threading the paths their feet have worn;
Greeting with joy the morn's clear dome,
Gathering their roses, with never a thorn.

If the wiles of the way grip a dallying band,
There's the accusing old sun to remind them;
Straightway they leave in the kodak sand
Small barefoot tracks behind them.

Boys, stalwart and ruddy, "with cheeks of tan,"
Vie with each other in strength and skill,
Both striving to prove the better man—
A bloodless battle rolls down the hill.

The mimic housewife plies her tasks
And deems them regal quite in splendor;
The Autumn woods she gaily sacks
And marches home with her plunder.

With practiced grace she meets her friends
And leads with pride to her garnered hoard,
Where scarlet leaves and acorn cups
Bedeck a flat-rock festal board.

The mottled beach still guards the spring
That bubbles clear and cool from the hill;
To the stepping stones the lichens cling,
Few now the steps that cross the rippling rill.

The shadows stretch themselves in the sun,
The hum in the hive takes a drowsy tone;
Dull tasks are ending, one by one,
Slow minutes creep by—'tis time to be gone.

The last foot has punished the old door stone,
Eager to fly with the wild birds, homing;
The old house sits in the silence alone,
Brooding and gray in the gloaming.

Gone is the old log house in the dale,
And gone are many it sheltered with me;
But close to my heart I gather them all,
Their voices I hear and their faces I see.

TO A COQUETTE.

I KNOW that seeming love
Can light those eyes divine,
But does its radiance warm or melt
That icy heart of thine?

Thy smile like arrows pierce
The heart's embattled shrine,
But did smile or tear e'er touch
That stony heart of thine?

The listening ear enrapt
Drinks in thy voice sublime,
But when did human tones entice
That wayward ear of thine?

O. eye and smile and voice,
I could love, and love you well;
If the substance cast the shadow
I would have this tale to tell.

THE SHADOW LAND.

WHERE is the line that divides
The real land from the shadows?
The ebb and flow of the tides,
Make sea and land of the meadows?

The ebb and flow of our ambitions
Show us broad views or mere glimpses;
Which is the real of these transitions
That make of us beggars or princes?

Make the shadow-land the real,
Speak the word and hold it fast;
Trail not in mire your fond ideal—
In the mold of thought our life is cast.

HAZEL EYES.

COULD I the vanished strains recall
To the harp that hangs on Tara's wall,
Or the tones of Orpheus' lyre invoke,
Or that voice which on creation broke;
One grand refrain should all comprise
To chant thy praises, Hazel Eyes.

Golconda's gems of splendor bright,
The diamond's glare, the sapphire's light,
The pearl's pale gleam, the ruby's glow,
The dazzling noons where orchids blow,
Or stars that deck Italian skies
Surpass thee not, bright Hazel Eyes.

The pilgrim bows at Mecca's shrine,
The sailor loves the glassy brine;
The Switzer's pride his native hills,
The cannon's roar the soldier thrills;
But more than all of these I'd prize
One glance from thee, sweet Hazel Eyes.

ON PRESENTING A GROWING PLANT.

IF the day is dark and dreary
And your eyes and the skies are teary,
Look at me and see me grow
And that will set your heart aglow.

DEAR HEART.
(To My Sister Phoebe.)

THE year was waning to its close, Dear Heart,
When our adieux were spoken low and
brief;

On that sad, gray day, when duty bade us part,
The heavens dropped with us their silent grief.

We two have roamed in leafy lane and field,
I in your arms—a babe—'twere all you'd ask;
Your careful hands my earliest steps upheld,
You taught my infant tongue to spell its little
task.

In work or play my groping hands you'd guide,
To soothe my grief you gave up all your store;
Sleeping, waking, you were by my side—
Just to love and 'tend "your baby," life could give
no more.

Life holds no truer love, Dear Heart,
Than love that would for each some burden bear;
Thus hand in hand we walk, though far apart,
And bridge the miles that would our joys impair.

Few now, though sweet, our meetings here,
But there, up there at the pearly gate,
We'll know the words in truth, "to part no more,"
When we pass over the line where the angels
wait.

HOPE, LOVE AND LIFE.

(To my friend, V. R., on her twenty-first birthday.)

FROM out the radiant heart of June,
Peals forth a song—a happy rune—
With hope and love and life in tune.

Hope.

Hope offers all things good and rare,
She gives you what she deems most fair,
And oft with promise answers prayer.

In darkest night she points to dawn,
On wildest seas, to the haven calm;
Into wounded hearts drops healing balm,
To your dearest wish she tunes her song.

Love.

"When I was young as you are young,
Lutes were touched and songs were sung,
And love-lamps in the windows hung."

Hark! on the trembling shades of night,
A love tune floats in rapt delight
And thrills the heart behind the light.

Life.

Life's broken plain before you lies,
Toils and tasks like Alps arise,
Their snowy peaks upbear the prize.

O'er August fields you careless roam,
And pluck their lilies white as foam,
With gladness bear your trophies home.

When Autumn's fleeting riches nod,
You rifle hill and teeming sod ——
September brings the goldenrod.

Now December's wolds with silver gleam,
You leave with them the fettered stream
In a cosy nook to reflect and dream.

A FIELD OF MAIZE.
(Kentucky Corn.)

THE sweet wind breathes of "the corn-top blossom,"

The whispering pennons float on the summer air;

The green ranks stand so straight and lissom,
And wave from swelling ears their red and yellow hair.

Its young and tender form by living suns caressed,
The mellow loam its riches gladly yield,
When by rain-fingers close 'tis pressed
Over all that stirring, breathing field.

What promise in that springing green,
What hopes grow with those luscious grains;
The faith that grasps the "things unseen"
Fruition crowns in "the latter rains."

THE RAIN IS PAST.

(SHE)

FLEECY clouds and dripping branches,
Golden glintings from the West,
Joyous pipings 'mid the hedges
Tell the rain is past.

Listen! Catch the echo from the cliff;
Fairy voice, I'd hold you fast.
Wondrous spirit, do not leave us
Like the rain that's past.

Look! Across the eastern verge
A glorious bridge is cast;
The bow of promise whispers faith,
And says the rain is past.

Plashy banks and murmuring sedges,
I shall love you to the last;
You always give me kindly greeting
When the rain is past.

Rocking on the dancing wavelets,
Heaving with the river's breast,
Our little boat is waiting for us—
Come, the rain is past.

Now we glide through liquid silver,
Diamond crowned each crest,
As the tiny billows clap their hands
And sing: "The rain is past."

O, bow of promise, mock me not
With hopes too sweet to last;
The havenly hills keep guard so near,
I'm sure the rain is past.

(HE)

O, laughing water, bear us on,
I've laid my oars to rest;
What care we for time or tide
Or if the rain be past.

The blue of Heaven is in her eyes,
Their sunshine on me cast,
Her lips are sweet as lily cups
Just when the rain is past.

O, could we glide forever on,
Hand and heart thus clasped;
I'd never wish to reach the shore,
I'd know for us forevermore
The rain and clouds were past.

ADDIE AND MAY'S FLOWER GARDEN.
(A True Story.)

DEAR little flowers, how trustful close
You come to the busy street;
You dare the peril of vandal foot and hand,
The passer-by to greet.

Then of too much boldness
Growing 'shamed and shy,
Stop to gaze in the stranger's face
With appealing, upturned eye.

Thus I saw thee, happy children
Of good old Mother Earth;
The South Wind tossed and kissed thee
In joyous, rioting mirth.

The sun caressed thee tenderly,
Adding brightness to each face;
Though nothing added could enhance
Its delightful charm and grace.

The North Wind saw it all with envy
From his icy realms afar;
With cold and barbarous rage he donned
His panoply of war.

His breath he sent before him,
Surcharged with frosty blight;
He blew upon those baby flowers
Through all that bitter night.

But Mother Earth extended wide
Her faithful, sheltering arms,
Where young sunbeams all day had lain
And left the cradle warm.

The North Wind clutched their tender forms,
From their refuge safe to wrest them;
But the rage that sought to kill her babes
Closer to her bosom pressed them.

South Wind and sun, their forces joined,
Resolved their powers allied to wield,
But marched against a vanquished host—
The foe had quit the field.

The poor, ill-used, pretty things—
I passed them once again;
With little faces bruised and scarred,
They gave no sign of pain.

So happy in the South Wind's love,
Of all their cruel ills beguiled,
They gaily nodded as I passed
And stood right up and smiled.

THE DARKENED WAY.

THE way is rough and dreary,
And 'tis hard to walk alone;
My feet are worn and weary
And my steps so slow have grown.

The way is bare and lonely,
No flowers beside it blow;
The wayside springs are mossy,
The trees no shadows throw.

I have prayed in midnight silence
For one star to light my way,
When the darkness bade defiance
To my pale lamp's feeble ray.

I sit 'neath the deadly upas,
And my soul in its poisons steep;
I dream 'tis the heavenly lotus
And sink in its gloom, asleep.

A LAMP TO MY FEET.

A GLORY sleeps on the waters,
A halo crowns the hills;
The sun, with his parting splendor,
The earth with radiance fills.

I walk in this glowing pathway
My feet no weariness know,
For the birds sing gay in the branches,
And flowers around me blow.

And I thank the Gracious Giver
For the blessings on me poured—
The cool, refreshing fountains,
The soul's dear daily food.

And I sit at the end of my journey,
Beside the river of life,
And the fruit of the tree immortal,
I taste in Paradise.

DEAD.

Ⓟ H, why should the heart grow cold
And dull with age as with frost or blight?
O, to feel it throb again as of old
On that radiant summer night!

The wind and the waves sang low,
They told of a deep heart's ease;
But never again can two hearts glow
As that night you kissed me under the trees.

O, that my soul could be fired with the flame
That burned so steadily then;
The power to move in the sound of a name
Never can redden the cheek again.

In vain we reach for those vanished hours;
They are dead and cold in their winding sheet—
Cover them over with tears and flowers—
They are gone; but to miss them life were in-
complete.

OMENS.

THE mullein stalk I named my love,
And broke its stem his truth to prove;
He loves but me—the omen's true—
It upward turned and bloomed anew.

I pluck the dodder's scarlet thread,
Twirl it thrice about my head;
Call my sweetheart's name and let it go.
If he loves me truly it will grow.

The spider spins her slender thread,
Her nimble fingers brush my head;
I know the sign can silence break
And a bashful lover soon will speak.

The red bird flits to his leafy nest,
A flash of flame through the beech's crest;
A message true he brings to me,
He says, "Your love you soon shall see."

The whippoorwill's first note of spring
Falls on my ear in the twilight dim;
Three wishes that I will not rue
I make, and trust their coming true.

The young moon smiles from the opal west,
Just waked from sleep on the twilight's breast;
If I speak no word nor look away,
Three wishes she will grant some day.

TO M. O.

YOUR wood-paths now are lonely,
Deserted, bare and cold;
But I see them in their glory
When the trees wore red and gold.
When they don their greenest dresses
And call you to adore,
When you tread their shadowed passes,
Then think of me once more.

LINES FOR A VALENTINE.

Dear Friend:

Your world, I know, is wrapped in snow,
While in my world the roses blow;
As friends are true in any clime,
I claim my friendship's Valentine.

CHILDHOOD.

HAPPY childhood never dies,
'Tis a book we read in youth and age;
To its living scenes the memory flies
To pore again upon its fadeless page.

MY SWEETHEART.

THE Night is my sweetheart,
You've heard how she's gowned:
"Sable robes, all fringed with light,"
Somberly trailing the ground.

Her mantle, the galaxy,
Floats up to the skies;
The Moon is her coronet,
Though Stars are her eyes.

The Sun would ensnare her,
Yet before him she flies;
He'll ne'er overtake her,
Though for aeons he tries.

Timid Jupiter fears her—
With eight moons she's repelled;
Grave Saturn adores her
And with rings she's enthralled.

She coquets with Neptune,
Bold Mars is her slave;
At her feet doffs his helmet,
The knightly old brave.

With soft, dewy fingers
The eyelids she closes
While steeping the senses
In poppies and roses.

With my head on her bosom,
Dull Care takes her flight—
O, I love her, I love her;
My Sweetheart, the Night.

LEAD ME HOME.

UPON the bleak and stony hills I wander,
A foolish, straying sheep; and squander
Precious time and strength—a willful choice—
But I listen, dear Shepherd, for Thy voice:
O, call Thy wanderer home.

The rocks and thorns are sharp, my feet
Are torn and bleeding; the cold winds beat
And buffet me—I perish for Thy sheltering fold,
So far I've wandered on this barren wold.

O, tender Shepherd, call me home.

I am wounded by the hunter's darts,
I am so weary, and the light departs;
I stumble 'mid the snaring vines and pits,
My eyes are heavy, a false light before them flits:
Dear Savior, take my hand and lead me home.

WILD ROSES.

I SAW them on the hillside,
In a green tangle of wildwood;
The pinkest pink whose art
Ever enticed a kiss to maiden's cheek,
Or gave a greater charm
To the flower-face of childhood.
If a sight more enchanting you would seek,
Go view their counterpart
Blowing by the rill-side.

MY CASTLE IN SPAIN.

HAVE you noticed the blue in the distance,
Where the mountain climbs up from the
plain?

That is the place where I've builded
My stateliest castle in Spain.

When the moon to the night gives her splendor,
I see all the turrets and battlements plain;
With the sentinel fleet up in cloudland,
They are guarding my princely domain.


A stream laps the foot of my castle,
A river so placid and clear;
There the beautiful thoughts of the inmates,
Like the faces of angels, appear.

The ocean sweeps round to my castle,
The harbor is always in sight;
I keep watch for my ships coming in,
With cargoes of endless delight.

The highway that leads to this castle,
As yet sadly fails on my sight;
As through a mist I see it in daytime,
Though I discern it more clearly at night.

Steadily fixing my vision upon it,
My lingering steps to that beacon I bend;
Like the rainbow, I fear 'tis a lure,
And I'll garner no gold at the end.

TREES.

 THE friendly trees, how we love and prize
 them,

Our own familiar trees, we almost humanize them;
They hold their strong protecting arms above us
And we feel, in fancy, that they know and love us.

O, the stately trees, they bow before the sleety gale,
But proudly rise to face it, clad in shining mail;
Or whisper soft in "summer's leafy prime,"
To lull the restless birdlings at sleepy twilight time.

O, the social trees, they bow, embrace and kiss
When Autumn winds their branches toss and twist;
They moan and sigh and wring their hands in
 sorrow,
We know not if for yesterday or the trials of
 tomorrow.

The proud forest patriarch boasts five hundred
 rings,
But five thousand loves have spread ungrateful
 wings
And flown from arms so loath to let them go,
Yet the brave heart smiles in the sunset's lingering
 glow.

We lie beneath our favorite tree to ponder and to
 plan,
To resolve and dream, to hope when hopes outrun
Sober sanity; and we view that promised land
On which our eye is set and where we fain would
 stand.

GOLDEN RODS.
(A Song.)

THE golden rods were blooming fair,
My lover placed them in my hair;
I gazed into his loving eyes
And kissed him 'neath the moonlit skies;
I looked into his faithful eyes—
He gave this pledge 'neath tender skies:

“When the golden rods shall bloom again
I'll quit for thee the beckoning main,
I'll bring to thee bright jewels rare
To deck thee for my bride so fair;
The diamond's light, the ruby's glow
I'll place upon that brow of snow.”

The golden rods have bloomed again,
But they fill my heart with breaking pain;
My lover lies beneath the wave,
The billows moan above his grave;
My lover sleeps on a coral bed,
The surges weep above his head.

The golden rods will bloom again,
But they'll wave above this heart of pain;
They'll point to that fair world above
Where I shall greet the one I love.
In vernal fields above the sod
'Twill be asphodel for golden rod.

A DREAM OF REST.

WHATEVER of earth's fair joys be ours,
Whatever of bliss we meet
And noble actions framed for good
And forms of rarest beauty greet,
All to us imperfect seems,
The ideal only comes in dreams.

'Twas thus I thought as I musing sat
And this question with reason I asked:
Could we from toil, in life, be free,
Can earth accord us perfect rest?
While pondering this, a riddle seemed,
I slept and knew not that I dreamed.
Above the horizon blazed the sun,
'Twas morn and the world was awake;
A deafening din on the day's sweet calm
Seemed from city and hamlet to break.
" 'Tis toil and care," I bitterly said,
Nor looked nor stopped, but onward fled.

I paused as I came to a river's brink
That crossed my way with headlong speed;
Weary and worn, I cried to the stream:
"O, river, to me I pray thee, give heed,
Pause thou and rest, there is no need to flee;
Why give thy treasures all to the sea?"

But the river flowed on with a murmuring song
And the reeds and rushes caressing it swayed
In their happier mood, to taunt me, they seemed,
As alone on the rugged banks I strayed.
Looking and yearning, but never content
With blessings and gifts to me only lent.

Yet an eager desire to know of the life

That ebb'd and flow'd on the other shore
Impell'd me on, with eager haste.

I said: "I will seek it and toil no more;
There rest, fair goddess, my cares shall beguile,
Only sleeping to dream and waking to smile."

Where the willows kissed the blue waters below,
'Neath a dark cliff that reared its head to the gale,
A little boat rock'd and rose on the tide;

I sat me under its rounded sail
While the whispering breeze, o'er the wavelet's crest,
Bore me across to the isle of rest.

With a trembling heart I stepped on the shore,
Where glittering sands like rare gems shone,
Where strange bright flowers their petals dropp'd
And where down by the limpid waters borne,
Awhile they lay on its tranquil breast,
Then down they sank in blissful rest.

A misty veil o'erspread the sky,
Long bright lines the sunbeams made;
Music fill'd the air, sweet as aeolian harp,
By the softest summer breezes play'd;
With enchantment's touch the senses calm'd,
The liquid notes the soul embalm'd.

Aroma-laden breezes swept
From flowery dell and blooming grove,
Bright fountains toss'd their silver spray
And a rainbow web with the sunbeams wove.
I paused, entranced with scenes so rare,
Amaz'd that earth could be so fair.

Yet e'er had heart and ear and eye
Of this elysium drank their fill,
A tremulous sound, as of words breath'd low
Close I heard, so close that thrill
Swept o'er me, and there at my side
A form of rare beauty and grace I espied.

I quick recoiled as her eyes' mild fire
Burned into my soul, my thoughts to read;
A smile of pitying scorn she wore,
As divining the spirit in me, she said:
"What seekest thou here?" I answered, "Rest."
May I not find it here, where all is blest?"

"O, drive me not hence! I fain would stay
Where care and toil are unkown,
Where no pain is felt, no tear dims the eye,
And no sigh is heard nor piteous moan;
Where the harshest sounds are the songs of birds
And tales of love in whispered words."

Then said the goddess, for such she seemed,
"If this is thy quest, thou seekest in vain;
Such rest as this thou canst not find.

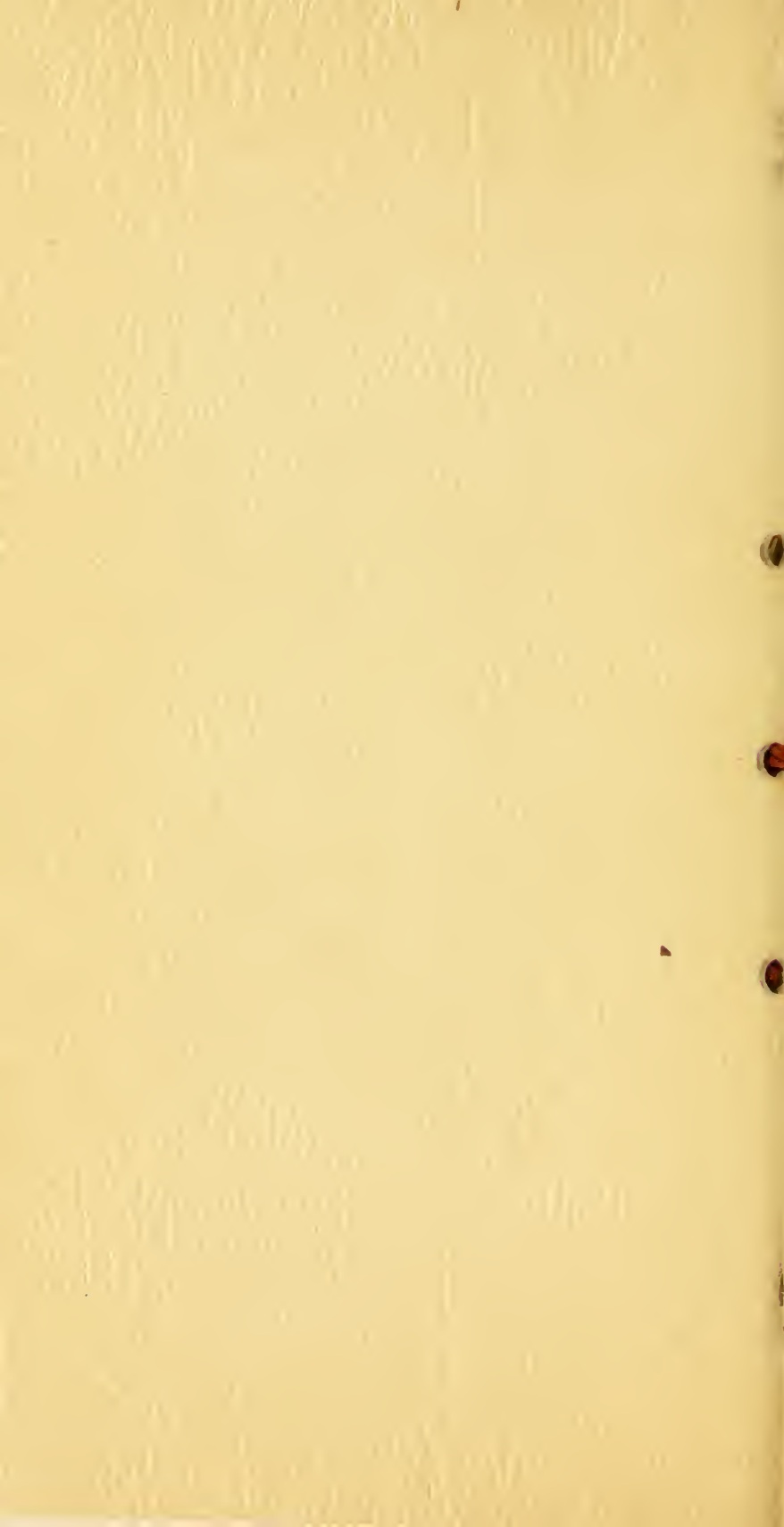
This is a world of toil and pain,
Nothing is gained, but we something forego,
They who would rest must toil before."

"Go back to the work thou hast dastardly fled,
Take up thy burdens with a heart brave and true,
Withhold not thy hand from the needy and weak,
Do with a will what thou findest to do;
To the cry for aid thine ear ever lend,
And rest thy labors will crown in the end."

She spoke thus and vanished—I saw her no more;
In amazement I 'woke—but the vision had fled,
Yet the lesson it taught shall live in its stead:

"Nothing is gained, but we something forego,
They who gain rest must toil before;
To the cry for help thine ear ever lend,
And rest, thy toils shall crown in the end.







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